

**{As Prepared for Delivery}**

**Hawaii Energy Initiative  
January 11, 2006**

**Thomas C. Dorr  
Under Secretary for Rural Development  
Remarks**

**Thank you for that kind introduction.**

**It is both a privilege and a pleasure for me, on behalf of President Bush and Secretary Johanns, to be here today in support of the Energy for Tomorrow Initiative.**

**With this proposal, Governor Lingle is positioning Hawaii among the nation's energy leaders. There are few areas of greater strategic importance to the economic vitality of Hawaii in the decades ahead. And there are few policy investments that will yield greater dividends in the years to come.**

**For over 30 years, ever since the oil embargo of 1973, alternative energy has been both a gleam in the eye and a political football. But as we all**

**know, if good intentions, speeches, press releases, and political gamesmanship produced energy, the energy crisis would have been solved decades ago.**

**Today, however, we're dealing with new realities. The gleam in the eye has become a shovel in the ground. It's happening. The barrier to renewables has been price. But \$50-60 per barrel oil has changed the equation. As a result, a new energy economy is taking off:**

- U.S. ethanol production last year exceeded 4 billion gallons. The 7.5 billion gallon renewable fuels standard will keep that growth on track.**
- Biodiesel has soared from about 5 million gallons in 2001 to 25 million last year.**
- U.S. wind power capacity by the end of last year reached 6,740 Megawatts, and another 5,000 MW are currently under construction or in negotiation.**

- **The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that wind can generate at least 6% of U.S. electricity by 2020. That's basically just an extrapolation of current growth rates.**
- **All of these are growing areas of investment for USDA Rural Development. We have long supported ethanol through our Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan program, as well as through Value Added Producer Grants for market research.**

**In addition, the 2002 Farm Bill charged us with an entire energy title, the Section 9006 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program, through which we support promising investments in biomass, wind, solar, geothermal, and hydrogen technologies.**

**Bottom line, energy is rural America's newest cash crop. That's why energy is a high priority for USDA Rural Development. We know that energy from agriculture isn't just a way of turning on the lights and filling up the gas pump. It also means good jobs, opportunities for young people, investment opportunities, and the recirculation of capital**

**through rural communities across the nation. The potential is almost unlimited.**

**When we reach the point at which we are driving our cars with ethanol from the Midwest instead of oil from the Mideast, we will have turned a very important corner – and the agricultural economy will have found its biggest new market in history.**

**But this isn't just an agricultural issue. We all have a role to play.**

**Energy is a national security imperative. It's an environmental issue.**

**It's a balance of payments and economic competitiveness issue. It touches literally everything.**

**For all these reasons, clean, sustainable, domestically-produced energy is an opportunity we simply can't afford to miss. But saying is one thing. Doing is another.**

**As Governor Lingle recognizes, appropriate public policy is critically important to deploying a new energy infrastructure -- just as it was**

**fundamental to the development of the oil, gas, and petroleum industries in previous generations.**

**It's not easy. As you know, President Bush worked for 4 years – and had to overcome partisan and parochial opposition every step of the way -- to win enactment last year of long-overdue comprehensive energy legislation at the federal level.**

**As this example demonstrates, there is simply no substitute for vision, leadership, and determination. The same is true at the State level. That's why the Governor's initiative is so important, and timely.**

**Bottom line: Hawaii is ideally positioned to take advantage of biofuels, wind, solar, and geothermal technologies. The potential is here.**

**Governor Lingle is now setting forth a comprehensive strategic plan to tap this potential for clean, renewable, affordable energy. This is truly an historic opportunity for Hawaii, and it is a privilege for me – on behalf of President Bush and USDA Rural Development – to be a part of it today. We look forward to working with you. Thank you.**